

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

GILES S. PORTER, M.D., Director

Weekly Bulletin

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EDITOR

Trichinosis in California

By GILES S. PORTER, M.D., Director California Department of Public Health

Trichinosis was first recognized as a distinct infection in 1860, and 25 years later, in 1886, the first cases of record occurred in California. Dr. W. D. Groton of Susanville reported to Dr. Gerrard G. Tyrrell, Secretary of the California State Board of Health, four cases of this disease that had occurred in his practice. The patients were members of an Italian family who had eaten the Italian style of raw sausage. The symptoms of the disease were typical and specimens, which were sent to Dr. Levi C. Lane of San Francisco, proved positive. The actual work in the examination of these specimens was done by Dr. Albert Abrams of "electronic reaction" fame, who had graduated from the University of Heidelberg in Germany in 1882 and who had been licensed to practice in California in 1884. Dr. Abrams had had the benefit of observing this disease in Germany and at this time was recognized as a particularly well educated and ethical practitioner of medicine.

Another case of the disease was reported the same year from Livermore. This case was in a German boy who worked in a butcher shop. The case was attended by Dr. W. S. Taylor of Livermore, who recognized the symptoms as those of trichinosis but who was unable to obtain any history of the patient having eaten pork until the day before the boy died, when he admitted that he had eaten some fresh pork and beef chopped together, seasoned with salt and pepper. He had eaten this mixture raw about one week before his illness began.

Since that time trichinosis has been reported in

California rather consistently, but during recent years the apparent incidence of the disease has been increased greatly. While most cases that have been reported in California, like the first cases in 1886, have found their sources in the consumption of raw sausage, a considerable number of cases have been traced to the use of under-cooked pork meat and a wide variety of pork products. In 1930, 151 cases were reported, and in 1931 40 cases were reported. Nearly all of the evidence that has been gathered in connection with these cases shows that the infection came from home-slaughtered pork or home-prepared products eaten raw or insufficiently cooked. In 1932, so far, 19 cases of this disease have been reported.

A large group of cases occurred as recently as March of 1932 as a result of the consumption of raw sausage manufactured in the home from a hog slaughtered in the immediate vicinity of a municipal garbage dump. Investigations undertaken by the California Department of Public Health showed a very high infestation of rats on the dump. A very large number were trapped and examinations in the laboratory revealed the fact that 40 per cent of these rat specimens proved positive for *trichinella spiralis*. A large number of cats was also present on the premises and 16 were killed. Eleven of these showed evidence of *trichinella spiralis* upon laboratory examination. Following this outbreak, which involved eight cases in human beings, garbage dumps in a number of cities in the San Francisco Bay district were inspected. Rat specimens were taken from all of them and

trichinellae were demonstrated in rat specimens collected from all of these garbage dumps.

Two outbreaks of trichinosis due to eating uncooked, "jerked" bear meat have occurred in California, both of which outbreaks were traced to Trinity County. The first group involved four individuals, two of whom died. The second group involved 18 cases, one of which proved fatal. In the mountainous districts bears sometimes kill and eat both hogs and rats. So far as is known, these are the only outbreaks of trichinosis, contracted through the consumption of improperly cured bear meat, that have ever occurred within the United States.

The rather widespread occurrence of this disease in California and the appearance of sporadic cases in widely separated districts, together with the fair regularity with which the disease is reported, make it appear that the disease may be far more prevalent than is recognized generally. Since the fatality rate within this area is low and since the disease is confined largely to foreign-born residents whose racial custom it is to eat sausage in raw form, there is a certain apathy regarding the enforcement of measures for its control. Since the severity of the individual case is dependent largely upon the degree of infestation in the product consumed, it is reasonable to suppose that many unrecognized cases occur. It would seem necessary at the present time that strict supervision be maintained over all places where garbage may be fed to hogs. It is important that the presence of no garbage dumps be tolerated in the immediate vicinity of hog ranches. Rat control work should be carried on incessantly upon all garbage dumps and the existence of no rat harbors of any sort should be tolerated on or near such places. Feeding platforms for hogs, particularly where garbage is fed, should be elevated at least 18 inches above the surface of the ground. Feeding platforms, if upon ground level, should be constructed of concrete and surrounded by a wall of the same material which extends at least 18 inches below ground level and at least four inches above the surface of the feeding platform. All offal from slaughterhouses should be thoroughly cooked before feeding and a suggestion is made that it may be necessary, eventually, to require cooking of all garbage that may be used for feeding hogs, as uncooked offal and scraps of raw pork generally may be found in garbage. The potential source of infection in such products, under present conditions, is considerable and it is quite probable that this disease can not be brought under the control which it deserves without the establishment of regulations which would require the thorough cooking of such garbage.

Examinations conducted recently by the California Department of Public Health indicate that there is a much higher infestation in garbage-fed hogs than in those which are fed with grain. To be sure, grain-fed hogs may become infested as well as garbage-fed hogs, but rats are much more prevalent wherever garbage is found and the probability of infestation is increased greatly wherever these rodents exist. It is important, also, that hog raisers be required to make immediate disposal of all their stock which may die. Too often live hogs are permitted to feed upon dead hogs and strict supervision of hog ranches is necessary as a measure in the control of trichinosis. Until such time as measures such as these are actively enforced, the liability for increased incidence of the disease may be increased greatly.

If the regulations of the United States Department of Agriculture for the curing of pork products are followed precisely, there is little danger in the consumption of commercially packed pork products. There is one instance of record in California in which the regulations were not observed closely and unfavorable results followed. Holding pork products at specified low temperatures for prescribed periods of time, together with proper curing methods, provide essential factors of safety.

While the thorough cooking of all pork products is the best insurance against the contraction of the disease, no amount of work that may be attempted in the dissemination of this simple information will ever be 100 per cent effective. In addition to education of the public, there should be a concerted effort in controlling the disease as it may exist in hogs and rats. Until we have extended our efforts so as to break up this cycle, we may expect to have a large number of cases occur and we are placing in jeopardy, to a certain extent at least, the health of all consumers of pork products.

NEW HEALTH OFFICER FOR VACAVILLE

Mr. O. E. Alley has been appointed City Health Officer of Vacaville, to succeed Mr. W. F. Hughes, who has held the position for many years.

CHULA VISTA CHILDREN PROTECTED AGAINST DIPHTHERIA

Dr. F. E. Ashcroft, City Health Officer of Chula Vista, is conducting an immunization campaign in the prevention of diphtheria among school children of his city. A total of 400 out of 500 children attending the Chula Vista Union Grammar School has received three injections of toxoid.

FIVE CALIFORNIA CITIES WIN HEALTH HONORS

Winning cities in the 1931 Inter-Chamber Health Conservation Contest, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce of the United States with the cooperation of the American Public Health Association, have been announced.

The winning cities for the six population groups in the contest are as follows:

Group One—Cities more than 500,000 population, Milwaukee.

Group Two—250,000 to 500,000 population, Rochester, New York.

Group Three—100,000 to 250,000 population, New Haven, Conn.

Group Four—50,000 to 100,000 population, Evanston, Ill.

Group Five—20,000 to 50,000 population, Brookline, Mass.

Group Six—Under 20,000 population, La Salle, Ill.

The 1931 contest has been the most successful of any during the three years the contest has been held. For the year there was an increase of more than 27 per cent in enrollment over 1930. The 265 cities competing represented 45 states, the District of Columbia and Hawaii. Although the requirements in 1931 were considerably more exacting than in 1930, more than 70 per cent of the cities in the contest for both 1930 and 1931 made higher scores for the latter than for the former year. If allowance is made for the higher requirements more than 90 per cent of these cities made higher scores in 1931 than in 1930.

A significant feature of the Health Contest has been the interest, particularly among business men that has been aroused in the competing cities. This has had the effect of bringing about definite health improvements. Activities in this direction have been carried on by local chambers of commerce, medical societies and health groups, many of them requiring community cooperation on a broad scale.

In addition to the winning cities, others were given honorable mention. Some of the honor cities were close runners-up to the winners. Honor cities in the six groups, listed alphabetically, follow:

Group I—	Kansas City, Mo.
Baltimore	Minneapolis
Detroit	Newark
Philadelphia	Toledo
Pittsburgh	Group III—
St. Louis	Grand Rapids
Group II—	Hartford, Conn.
Cincinnati	Syracuse

Utica
Yonkers

Group IV—

East Orange
Harrisburg, Pa.
Kenosha, Wis.
Pasadena, Cal.
Racine, Wis.

Group V—

Alhambra, Cal.

Maplewood, N. J.
Newburgh, N. Y.
Orange, N. J.
West Orange, N. J.
Watertown, N. Y.

Group VI—

Chestertown, Md.
Lodi, Cal.
Monrovia, Cal.
Palo Alto, Cal.
Shorewood, Wis.

Awards to the winning cities will be presented May 17, at the Twentieth Annual Meeting of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States at San Francisco.

NURSES TO MEET IN SANTA CRUZ

The California State Nurses' Association will hold its annual convention in Santa Cruz June 13-17. The California League of Nursing Education and the California Organization of Public Health Nursing will meet at the same time. Breakfast conferences, special luncheons for discussion of particular subjects will be held each day of the convention.

The evening session on Thursday, June 16, will be devoted to public health and a breakfast conference on Friday, June 17, will also be devoted to this subject.

Among the entertainment features is a supper at Big Basin Wednesday evening, June 15.

A large attendance of nurses from all parts of the State is expected.

MORBIDITY*

Diphtheria.

66 cases of diphtheria have been reported, as follows: Fresno 1, Kern County 1, Los Angeles County 13, Azusa 1, Burbank 1, Compton 2, Inglewood 1, Long Beach 1, Los Angeles 32, Pomona 1, San Gabriel 1, South Gate 3, Bell 1, Lincoln 1, San Francisco 4, Santa Clara County 1, San Jose 1.

Scarlet Fever.

174 cases of scarlet fever have been reported, as follows: Alameda 1, Berkeley 2, Oakland 4, Contra Costa County 1, Fresno County 2, Fresno 6, Glenn County 1, Humboldt County 1, Imperial County 1, Kern County 2, Bakersfield 1, Los Angeles County 20, Alhambra 2, Burbank 1, Compton 1, Glendale 1, Huntington Park 1, Long Beach 5, Los Angeles 53, Manhattan 1, Pasadena 5, Pomona 1, Redondo 1, Santa Monica 2, Sierra Madre 13, Gardena 1, Merced County 1, Orange County 2, Fullerton 1, Santa Ana 7, Sacramento 2, San Bernardino County 1, San Diego 8, San Francisco 3, San Mateo County 2, Burlingame 1, Daly City 1, Santa Barbara County 9, San Jose 2, Watsonville 1, Lindsay 2, Ventura County 1.

Smallpox.

9 cases of smallpox have been reported, as follows: Fresno County 4, Fresno 1, Los Angeles 2, San Francisco 1, San Jose 1.

* From reports received on May 16th and 17th for week ending May 14th.

Typhoid Fever.

5 cases of typhoid fever have been reported, as follows: Hayward 1, Oakland 1, Inglewood 1, Sacramento County 1, San Francisco 1.

Meningitis (Epidemic).

2 cases of epidemic meningitis from San Francisco have been reported.

Leprosy.

2 cases of leprosy have been reported, as follows: Oakland 1, San Joaquin County 1.

Poliomyelitis.

4 cases of poliomyelitis have been reported, as follows: Los Angeles County 1, Long Beach 1, Los Angeles 2.

Jaundice (Epidemic).

2 cases of epidemic jaundice from Stockton have been reported.

Food Poisoning.

5 cases of food poisoning from San Francisco have been reported.

Undulant Fever.

2 cases of undulant fever have been reported, as follows: Merced 1, Orange County 1.

Septic Sore Throat.

6 cases of septic sore throat have been reported, as follows: Berkeley 1, Huntington Park 1, Santa Monica 1, King City 3.

Measles.

717 cases of measles have been reported, as follows: Berkeley 3, Oakland 11, Gridley 7, Colusa 1, Contra Costa County 25, El Cerrito 1, Richmond 2, Glenn County 10, Orland 24, Humboldt County 1, Los Angeles County 1, Arcadia 1, Avalon 1, Long Beach 1, Los Angeles 15, Santa Monica 1, Madera County 9, Madera 14, Marin County 3, Sausalito 4, Napa 1, Plumas County 6, Riverside County 1, Sacramento 17, San Bernardino 1, San Diego 1, San Francisco 208, San Joaquin County 61, Manteca 22, Stockton 194, Burlingame 2, Daly City 8, Lompoc 2, Santa Clara County 14, Palo Alto 2, Willow Glen 1, Solano County 4, Vacaville 3, Vallejo 1, Sonoma County 2, Santa Rosa 1, Stanislaus County 22, Tehama County 2, Ventura County 1, Yolo County 4, Davis 1.

Whooping Cough.

395 cases of whooping cough have been reported, as follows: Alameda County 2, Alameda 5, Berkeley 6, Oakland 27, Piedmont 5, Humboldt County 3, Kern County 1, Los Angeles County 38, Arcadia 1, Beverly Hills 1, Claremont 4, Glendale 9, Huntington Park 2, Long Beach 24, Los Angeles 71, Pasadena 17, Pomona 2, Santa Monica 3, Lynwood 1, South Gate 5, Monterey Park 1, Madera County 1, Marin County 4, Merced County 1, Orange County 10, Brea 1, Santa Ana 5, La Habra 1, Tustin 3, Plumas County 3, Riverside County 5, Sacramento 5, San Bernardino 3, Chula Vista 1, San Diego 33, San Francisco 11, San Joaquin County 16, Stockton 12, San Luis Obispo County 6, Santa Barbara County 6, Santa Maria 1, Santa Clara County 2, Palo Alto 4, Willow Glen 3, San Jose 6, Watsonville 2, Sonoma County 1, Santa Rosa 1, Stanislaus County 4, Modesto 4, Tulare County 3, Sonoma 1, Ventura County 5, Winters 1.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REPORTS

Disease	1932				1931			
	Week ending			Reports for week ending May 14 received by May 17	Week ending			Reports for week ending May 16 received by May 19
	April 23	April 30	May 7		April 25	May 2	May 9	
Actinomycosis	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Botulism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Chickenpox	938	729	849	925	511	574	427	493
Coccidioides Granuloma	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1
Diphtheria	85	82	65	66	60	76	91	83
Dysentery (Amoebic)	3	3	5	2	2	1	0	7
Dysentery (Bacillary)	1	2	0	3	4	7	4	4
Encephalitis (Epidemic)	1	2	1	0	1	2	1	2
Erysipelas	22	26	20	21	18	44	18	18
Food Poisoning	5	4	13	5	11	0	0	7
German Measles	10	13	14	17	49	18	18	6
Gonococcus Infection	169	146	144	159	105	151	126	144
Influenza	66	75	65	57	277	109	57	53
Jaundice (Epidemic)	3	1	0	2	2	0	1	0
Leprosy	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	1
Malaria	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0
Measles	634	614	709	717	1,579	1,417	1,371	1,174
Meningitis (Epidemic)	3	5	11	2	7	11	7	7
Mumps	206	193	194	184	359	296	319	287
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Paratyphoid Fever	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	0
Pellagra	0	1	0	1	2	3	1	7
Pneumonia (Lobar)	42	40	49	61	34	107	54	38
Poliomyelitis	4	2	2	4	6	4	0	4
Rabies (Human)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Rabies (Animal)	11	9	11	8	17	23	52	18
Relapsing Fever	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scarlet Fever	189	164	163	174	164	163	162	151
Septic Sore Throat	0	2	3	6	9	2	6	2
Smallpox	16	5	21	9	55	45	31	27
Syphilis	218	210	191	211	149	217	191	172
Tetanus	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Trachoma	8	3	2	7	1	7	4	3
Trichinosis	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tuberculosis	238	315	244	205	202	258	227	185
Typhoid Fever	12	5	6	5	11	18	12	8
Undulant Fever	2	1	1	2	2	0	0	2
Whooping Cough	470	374	375	395	406	328	316	275
Totals	3,365	3,033	3,162	3,255	4,044	3,881	3,496	3,184

Chickenpox and measles are most prevalent of the reportable diseases.

Two cases of leprosy were reported last week.

Food poisoning continues to occur with regularity. Health conditions, in general, are good.